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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MAPUTO 001538

SIPDIS

STATE PASS TO MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

STATE FOR AF/S AND AF/FO

MCC FOR BRIGGS AND GAULL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE 2004 GENERAL ELECTIONS: ELECTION EVE

REF: A. MAPUTO 1494

[B](#). MAPUTO 1474

[C](#). MAPUTO 1406

[D](#). MAPUTO 1371

Classified By: Ambassador Helen La Lime for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Summary

[1](#). (C) Campaigning for Mozambique's December 1 - 2 general elections has ended, and there is no consensus as to what outcome is likely. The negotiations between the National Elections Commission and the European Union appear to have ended with the release of a new electoral process directive that sets the level of observer access at the tabulation phases. The changes do not meet EU demands for full transparency, but they do appear to reduce the space for manipulation. Similarly, vote tabulation software appears to have been made more secure, though RENAMO continues to express concern. The two main parties are accusing each other of planning various dirty tricks. Former President Carter has arrived to lead the Carter Center observation effort. Post does not expect major problems on the voting days, though isolated incidents and some confusion are inevitable, as are RENAMO claims of fraud. Once the voting is complete, attention will shift to the provincial and national levels of tabulation, which are expected to last until the December 17 deadline for publication of results. End Summary.

Campaign Ends

[2](#). (C) The official campaign period ended December 28. FRELIMO candidate Armando Guebuza and RENAMO candidate Afonso Dhlakama drew enthusiastic crowds to their events, though it is not clear how many were attracted by T-shirts and other handouts. Guebuza's rallies have included large numbers of government workers and officials, and many observers assume that FRELIMO is using public resources. Mrs. Guebuza has played a visible campaign role, making her the first candidate's wife to do so. Dhlakama has made many unrealistic promises of the prosperity that would result if he is elected. He also claimed in a recent interview that if the election is not democratic, he would govern by force in the provinces where he wins a majority, though it is difficult to imagine him attempting to do so. Unlike in the 1999 election, candidates from three other parties are in the race. One, Raul Domingos of the Party for Peace, Development and Democracy (PDD) appears to be attracting support. In the absence of reliable polls (polls are prohibited during the campaign, and the few pre-campaign polls were not credible), it is not clear what result is likely.

[3](#). (C) Domingos' apparent success has led some observers to raise the possibility of a runoff. In 1999, running only against Dhlakama, incumbent President Chissano only managed to get 52 percent of the votes. It is conceivable that Guebuza and Dhlakama could split most of the vote with Domingos receiving five percent or so, which would mean that no candidate would receive the 50 percent needed for a first-round victory. According to electoral law, a runoff must take place within 21 days from the date the National Elections Commission (CNE) publishes the first round results, set by law for December 17. Despite claims that a runoff would not be difficult logistically, a UNDP source at the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE) admitted during a November 18 donor group meeting that no planning or preparation has taken place to support a second round. There are more than 10 million registered voters and 12,000 polling stations throughout the country, so it is unclear how another round could occur on schedule. The source implied that there may be wiggle room in the law, predicting that any runoff would not be held before mid-February.

CNE Sets Terms of Observer Access

[4](#). (C) On November 18, the CNE effectively closed the door to further negotiations on observer access with the issuance of a new directive, Deliberation 77. (Ten of the CNE's 18 members represent FRELIMO, while the others represent RENAMO. Many of the recent electoral process decisions have been

taken by the FRELIMO majority over the opposition of the RENAMO representatives.) The directive caught many close to the dispute by surprise. According to a source at the Dutch Embassy, the negotiations, though admittedly stalled, had not been abandoned by the EU and they were unaware the CNE was planning new directives. Deliberation 77 is an improvement, in that press and observers are provided access to the reclassification of null and protested ballots, as well as a computer link to view final tabulation data. However, the access granted still falls short of full transparency sought by the European Union, the Carter Center and Commonwealth observers. In addition to these groups, there also will be observers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states and embassies resident in Maputo, including 17 from post. (See reftels.) Former President Carter arrived in Maputo on November 28 to head the Carter Center's observation mission.

15. (C) Deliberation 77 also confirms that there will be two official parallel quick counts by the STAE -- one at the provincial level and one in Maputo -- both completed on the basis of polling station result sheets (editais). Deliberation 77 states that the provincial count "prevails, in general," over the Maputo count. However, the CNE may overrule provincial count decisions in all parts of the tabulation process. Any such decisions would be carried out by the CNE without public access, though the RENAMO CNE members would presumably be present, and it is unclear if the CNE will later publish a full list of changes made to provincial counts. On a positive note, unlike years past, copies of editais from individual polling stations will not be faxed to the CNE in Maputo for the parallel count but will be hand-carried by two people, each representing one of the two major parties. (Note: RENAMO's objection to faxing editais was upheld by the CNE, based on experience from the 2003 municipal elections where a FRELIMO STAE technician in Beira was caught tampering with editais before they were faxed. End note.)

16. (C) However, as in past elections, the CNE has again ruled that polling station results excluded from the provincial count due to errors, often minor human ones, will be reconsidered by the CNE without public access. In the 1999 elections, more than 1800 editais, or 11 percent of the total, were excluded from provincial totals and sent to Maputo for reconsideration by the CNE. That year, RENAMO walked out in protest during the time-consuming and often contentious reconsideration process, leaving FRELIMO CNE members to make final judgments. In the end, the CNE accepted about one-third of the problem editais, rejecting the remaining two-thirds as unusable. This meant that over 300,000 votes cast for president were not counted. (Note: Various international organizations conducted parallel calculations that suggested the excluded editais came from areas supporting RENAMO. However, no recalculation indicated that the final result would have changed in favor of Dhlakama. End note.)

----- New Polling Stations -----

17. (SBU) Some diplomats and international donor representatives are also concerned with the recent addition of polling locations. Voters in Mozambique may only cast ballots at their designated polling station, usually the site where the individual registered to vote. STAE has recently added new polling locations for this year's general elections, in some cases miles away from existing sites. Despite civic education campaigns informing voters of adjustments in locations, the changes are likely to disenfranchise some voters.

----- Watching the Count -----

18. (SBU) There is also the issue of observer access at the provincial and national tabulation phases, where the records of votes from each polling station will be added and disputed or invalid votes reviewed. Although the CNE spokesperson recently assured the press that journalists, party representatives, and observers could pull up through a computer link any edital from any polling station and compare it to their own copy, it is still unclear whether this will indeed be possible. Not all provinces will be equipped with computer links for observers, and in practice, provincial election officials will have a considerable amount of leeway in what observers may do. In addition, the database will not provide details on missing editais -- the result of slow data entry, perhaps, or the more troublesome excluded editais. Also, limitations in data collected by observers and party representatives means that there will be discrepancies between the provincial final results and the observer data, opening the window for manipulation. The CNE has only recently approved the software used to tabulate the editais -- reportedly over RENAMO objections. After a very quick audit, which appears to have resulted in changes to make the system

somewhat more secure, the system was presented to the parties, observers, and the press on November 27.

19. (SBU) Both FRELIMO and RENAMO will conduct detailed parallel counts, as will the National Electoral Observatory (an NGO) helped by the Carter Center. Organizations involved in the parallel counts are confident that, if they have the information they need before the election to choose their sample sites, their counts will be no more than two percent off the actual results. With this proviso, manipulation in anything but a close race ought to be easily detected.

Mutual Accusations

110. (C) As the voting approaches, FRELIMO and RENAMO have accused each other of plotting various misdeeds. President Chissano told the Ambassador during their Nov. 24 meeting on Zimbabwe (septel) that RENAMO was readying disruption tactics to use during the voting. He said he had learned that RENAMO would urge all its supporters to cast their ballots on the first day of voting, December 1. Then, on December 2, party activists would stage "disturbances" to scare off other voters, most of them presumably FRELIMO backers. Separately, RENAMO has claimed that there is a plot to kill Dhlakama, and RENAMO called embassies to report that police had fired tear gas at Dhlakama supporters at RENAMO's Nov. 28 end-of-campaign rally. Also, RENAMO continues to object to nearly all CNE decisions relating to the elections process, and the CNE has accused RENAMO of instructing its participants in the process to block the use of the vote tabulation software. Post has not heard independent confirmation of any of the various allegations.

Comment

111. (SBU) Post expects routine problems at polling places on the voting days, mainly of a logistical rather than an intentional nature. We also expect RENAMO to claim fraud regardless of how widespread these problems are. Once the voting is complete, attention will shift to the provincial and national levels of tabulation, which are expected to last until the December 17 deadline for publication of results.
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